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Virginia architecture in the seventeenth century : the medieval style

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VIRGINIA ARCHITECTURE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:
THE MEDIEVAL STYLE

Thesis

for

Dr. Frances W. Gregory

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree

Bachelor of Arts

University of Richmond

Elizabeth Neal Pitzer

1976

Little, Disciplinary Major

VIRGINIA ARCHITECTURE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:

THE MEDIEVAL STYLE

Virginia colonists recreated the old world in the new in the seventeenth century. They brought to America the medieval style of architecture so popular with the humbler classes of artisan and yeoman in England. People from this element of society, hoping to improve their fortunes, immigrated to the new world. Longing for familiar landmarks, they built homes in the traditional medieval style reminiscent of England. A medieval cottage was also a practical dwelling for the colonial family because it was fairly simple for the amateur builder to construct.

There are few examples of seventeenth-century architecture left to posterity. This paper will be concerned with the development of the medieval style in Virginia through description of the architecture and historical background of three such houses: the Old Stone House in Richmond, the Adam Thoroughgood House in Norfolk, and Bacon's Castle in Surry County. The Richmond house, the most primitive, is still in its original hall and parlor plan. The Thoroughgood House, originally a hall and parlor dwelling, was converted in the eighteenth century to a central-passage style. The most architecturally advanced house is Bacon's Castle. This cruciform-shaped house is the only extant Jacobean home in America.

Early homes in Virginia reflected the lower-class background of the typical colonist. Settlers coming to Virginia were generally from the humbler classes of society. Except for a few adventurers and fortune-seeking younger sons of the nobility, colonists were mostly craftsmen and yeomen.¹ A chance for success in a "New World" would naturally be more alluring to men who were neither rich, nor particularly successful in England. This less prosperous element of society inhabited rural England; the wealthier, middle-class merchants resided in the cities. Architecture is slowest to change in rural areas. A cottage built during the reign of James I differed little from one built during Henry VII's time. Whereas the classical design of English renaissance architecture was beginning to be appreciated by the aristocracy, it had not yet permeated to the lower classes in rural England. The small folk took pride in their medieval heritage. Tradition is strong in uneducated societies, so the medieval style of building persisted in the English countryside until the eighteenth century. It is not surprising then, that the Virginia colonists, coming mostly from the yeoman and artisan class of England, built a familiar type of home.²

Nostalgia influenced building styles of seventeenth-century Virginia. The colonists were not only far from home, they were the first white men to attempt to settle the North American wilderness. Homesickness fostered the development of the most English environment possible. Men built homes similar to the ones they remembered from boyhood, but these buildings lacked the refinements that their generation was develop-

ing in the mother country. This trend toward a more primitive construction was intensified by the absence of professional architects among the settlers. The early colonial style was a folk-architecture based on memory and the simplest methods of construction. The combination of these factors put American architecture about a generation behind that in Britain until the American Revolution.

In contrast to the handicaps on architectural style, colonial builders had a plentiful supply of raw materials. Thich woods enabled them to construct durable homes from local lumber. But most frame and clapboard dwellings were destroyed by fire; only a few brick or stone houses remain after three centuries to illustrate the Virginia medieval style of building. Brickmakers, included among the earliest settlers, baked native clay into bricks as early 1611,³ when the governor ordered kilns at Henricus. Speculation that the bricks were imported from England is unlikely since the colonists had need for many commodities which they could not manufacture themselves; these items, not bricks, filled the cargo hold on trans-Atlantic crossings.⁴ Brick was apopular building material because it was less of a fire-hazard than wood. Brick was easily accessible in 1637, when a law decreed that a brick dwelling of twenty-four by sixteen feet with a cellar should be erected on all one-hundred acre plots of land. Lots of five hundred or more acres were to have proportionately larger buildings. The governor, however, never enforced this law.⁵ A contemporary observer wrote that colonists possessed, "Lime in abundance...and House and Chimnies built of Brick...covered with

Shingell for Tyle...."⁶ The lime he mentioned, which was derived from Chesapeake Bay oyster shells, also provided plaster for the interior walls of the dwellings. The author of Leah and Rachel, a 1656 book, described Virginia rooms as being "daubed and white-limed."⁷ Nails, since they were made in England, were valued. To save nails for a new home, men burned houses they were abandoning.⁸ The roofs of most dwellings were usually covered with wooden or slate shingles, as opposed to the thatched roof so popular in England.

Characteristics of the English medieval style identify the early dwellings. The colonists used the same brick patterns and followed English precedent in the location of the chimneys, style of the windows, and in building separate outbuildings. The brick was most often laid in English bond (alternating rows of headers and stretchers). Glazed bricks were sometimes inserted in the gable wall to form decorative patterns. Like those in English models, the chimneys in these houses were almost always at the ends of the buildings, and built outside the house walls to allow heat to escape since Virginia summers are so hot.⁹ This plan contrasts with the New England building method where heat was conserved by using one central stack for the fireplaces between the hall and parlor.¹⁰ Casement windows with leaded diamond panes were used until the double-hung sash variety came into vogue in the eighteenth century. Shutters were installed so that window openings could be covered if the occupant of the house could not afford blown-glass.¹¹ Doors were double-thickness of planks (battened), heavily

studded with nails. Doorways and windows usually had segmental arches.¹² Early roofs were as steep as the thatched roofs in England had been--as much as a fifty-four degree angle.¹³ But the use of shingle rather than thatch later permitted a less-steep pitch for the roof and still provided adequate water-shedding, so roof slope became more gradual later in the century.¹⁴ The steep roof created a high, pointed gable end which was pierced by slit-windows that provided the only light to the loft, since there were no dormers. The severe gable was softened in the Jacobean style with the curvilinear (Cupid's bow) lines derived from the Flemish style of architecture.¹⁵

Seventeenth-century manor houses were surrounded by dependencies--stable, dovecot, barn, henhouse, slave quarters, kitchen, and a dairy. The custom of outbuildings was a holdover from medieval England.¹⁶ Separation of the kitchen building was practical in the South as it prevented the overheating of the house. Since there was no bucket brigade, fire destroyed many buildings in isolated areas. Consequently, the colonists soon realized the practicality of building the fire-prone kitchen apart from the main house. It was cheaper to replace a kitchen than to rebuild a home. Building the kitchen in this fashion left the southerners open to the criticism that the practice arose in order to keep the slaves at a distance. In fact, the custom comes from England, where cooking for the manor was done in outdoor huts, or by the fifteenth century, in separate buildings with fireplaces.¹⁷ Sometimes, as in Bacon's Castle, the kitchen and the "great house" were con-

nected by a covered passage called a curtain, or colonnade, which was supported by columns. The English precedent for the curtain occurs as early as the twelfth century, when it was known as the "penthouse" or "pentice," a covered alleyway or an external stair running between the hall and the kitchen. At St. Aylott's (circa 1500) in Saffron Walden, Essex, there remains a seventeenth-century pentice that would seem to be a typical model for the Virginia curtain passage.¹⁸ Though no one can deny the colonists' prejudicial treatment of their slaves, the separate kitchen is not necessarily a manifestation thereof.

The interior of the typical seventeenth-century farmhouse was not elaborate. It was functional, not decorative. The homes were one-story with a sleeping loft above. The most primitive dwellings had only one room, but as the colony prospered the hall and parlor style became the norm. Construction was by the exposed post-and-beam method.¹⁹ The split-log joists supporting the roof were made into the exposed beams of the low-ceilinged hall when the bark was removed to prevent wood beetles. Amateur whittlers sometimes decorated this chamfered edge of the beams with intricate running designs or elaborate moldings.²⁰ Colonists covered the area between beams with white-washed plaster, made from native oyster shells. Sometimes talented builders decorated the ceiling with ornamental plasterwork or fresco. Another later decorative device is paneling of vertical planks or wainscoting. Floors were simple pegged planks or brick laid in the English or Dutch style.²¹

Access to the loft of the earliest colonial homes was by means of a ladder. Stairs were generally added as the owner became wealthier and as his family, and hence his house, became larger. There were two popular styles of stair construction. The first plan, popular in the end-chimneyed hall and parlor house, placed the stair in the larger room (the "great hall"). In advanced plans the stair end of the room was partitioned off to form a central passage. The alternate method of adding stairs was frequently employed in homes with a central chimney (popular in New England). In this method the winding stair was squeezed into the area between the chimney and the wall.²² In New England the door often opened into a narrow stair-hall which protected the rest of the house from the wind and cold.²³ This type of staircase came about in medieval England when the yeoman transposed the stone staircase of the manor house into a wooden "spiral ladder" to fit within his chimney stack. The omission of a floor joist adjacent to the chimney made possible this advance over the ladder.²⁴

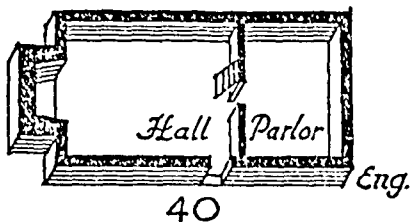
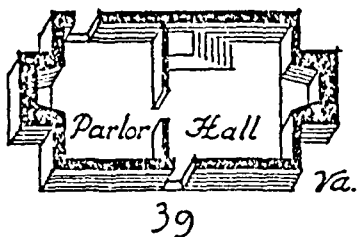
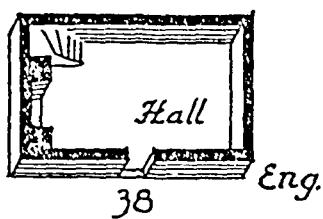
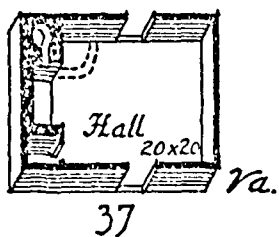
In modest homes (before the separate kitchen became customary) the most prominent feature of the room was the great fireplace. The fireplace measured approximately eight to twelve feet from breast to breast and was manteled by a massive oak beam. Brick baking ovens were built into the fireplace. Shallow closets sometimes occupied the space on either side of the chimney. As more luxurious commodities became available to the colonists, fireplaces were sometimes decorated with Delft faience tiles. Decorative hardware provided relief to the austerity of seventeenth-century pioneer homes. Batten

doors were hinged with cock's-head, butterfly, and H-L motifs. Key escutcheons for doors and windows were also elaborate.²⁵

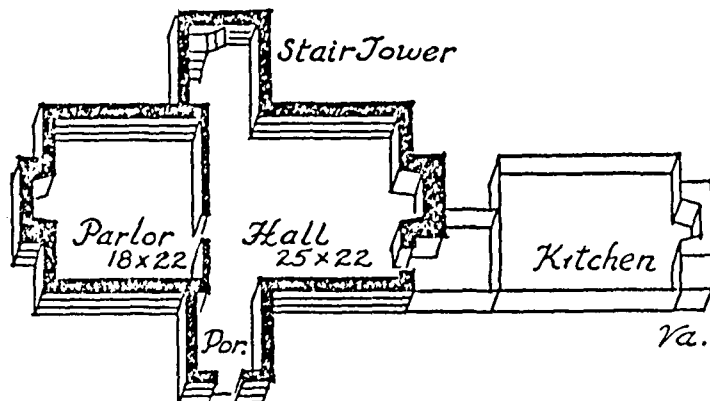
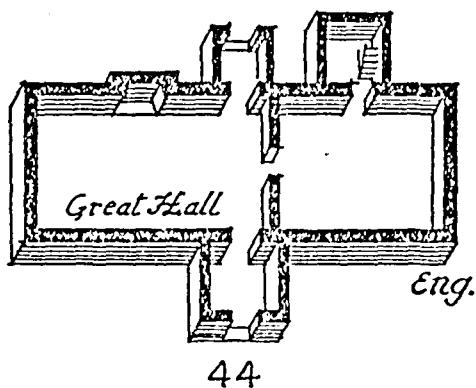
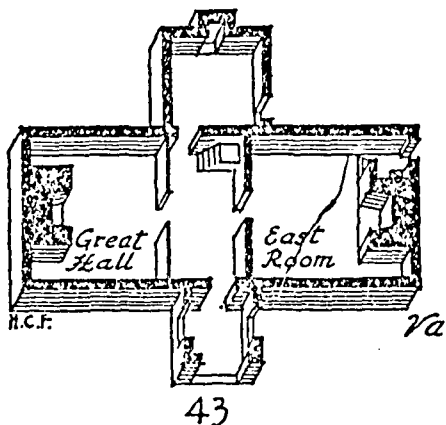
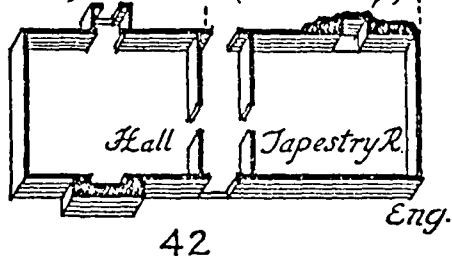
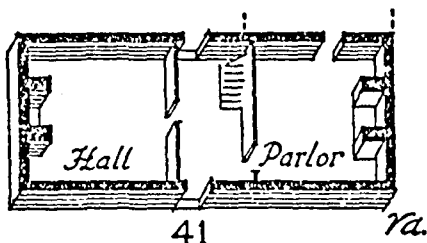
House plans of the seventeenth century followed four general types. The simplest was the one-room dwelling. This primitive home was enlarged by the addition of another room with its own fireplace, forming the end-chimneyed hall and parlor plan typical in Virginia. The central-passage plan was created when part of the "great hall" was partitioned off to form a stair hall between the front and rear doors. The cruciform-shaped dwelling, the most advanced, was formed by adding a "porch" and porch chamber to the front and a stair tower to the back of the central-passage house. The development of these house plans was not strictly chronological, because some wealthier colonists built "manor houses" very early, but it can be used as a general rule for dating seventeenth-century dwellings.²⁶

The most primitive, and generally the earliest type of rural dwelling was the one-bay cottage. The "House on Isaac Watson's Land" (circa 1644) at Jamestown is representative. This small house had one room approximately twenty feet square. This room served as kitchen, dining room, and living room to the occupants. A loft, reached by a ladder, provided cramped sleeping quarters for the family. The house was more than a hut though, because it had a brick floor, front and back doors, and small windows.²⁷ The one-bay plan was prevalent during the "cottage period," the first thirteen years of the settlement.²⁸

A settler often built his first home in the one-bay plan,



a common type of hall-and-parlor house, with end chimney, in 16th c. England



96 Bacon's Castle. Kitchen approximated

Forman's drawings show the development of Virginia house plans, as contrasted with their English counterparts.

but as his fortune or his family grew, he added a parlor onto his "multi-purpose" room. This hall and parlor style had been common in sixteenth-century England.²⁹ Its popularity in seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Virginia illustrates the lag in architectural advances between the mother country and the colonies.

The original hall (called after the "great hall" of the English medieval manor house) was typically the larger of the two rooms, and so served as the family dining room and gathering place. The front door opened directly into it to allow the free circulation of air necessary in such a warm climate. This is in contrast to the New England house, which had a small entry or narrow stair hall to protect the house from the cold when the door was opened.³⁰ Heat conservation in northern homes also dictated the continuation of the Flemish-inspired East Anglian practice of building one central chimney stack for both hall and parlor.³¹ The southern practice was to build separate end chimneys, with the stack outside the house wall to dissipate the heat of the cooking fire.³² The projecting chimneys were "pyramid"-shaped and the stacks were tall and often T-shaped to reveal multiple flues.³³

The typical Virginia hall and parlor dwelling was approximately twenty by forty feet in size.³⁴ The Old Stone House in Richmond, though unusual in its material, exemplifies this cottage plan.

The Adam Thoroughgood House is a perfect example of a hall and parlor dwelling that was converted (in the eighteenth century) to the central-passage style. The desire for more

privacy in the great hall led to the erection of a screen or wall separating the stairs from the living quarters. The English precedent for the central-passage began in the twelfth century with the custom of placing a "screens bay" at the end of the lord's hall opposite the dais. This custom had evolved by the sixteenth century to the use in the yeoman's cottage of a screen to separate the entry passage, or "hallen," from the hall.³⁵ The central-passage of colonial houses was at first a narrow passage to the stairs, but front and back doors created such comfortable cross-ventilation that in later homes the passage was enlarged to form a room used frequently in the summer.³⁶

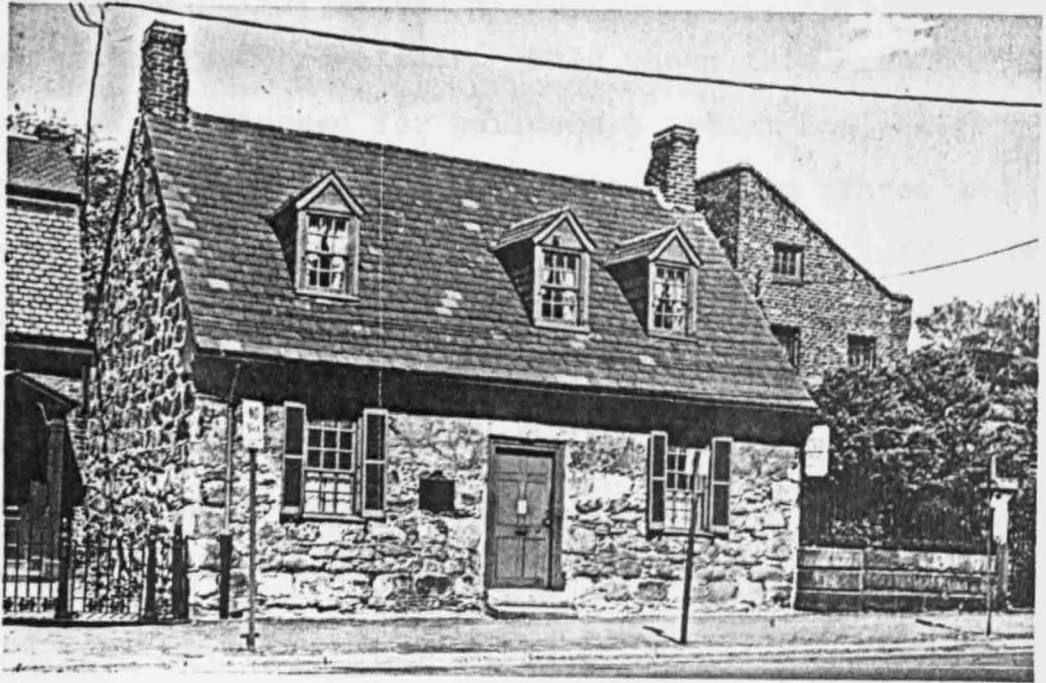
Bacon's Castle represents the culmination of medieval architectural development in Virginia in the cruciform-shaped house. Front and back projections were added to the hall and parlor or the central-passage house to create the cross plan. An enclosed entry-way, or "porch," with the porch chamber above it, projected from the front facade. A "T"-shaped house (sans the back wing) is also considered to be a cross house, but the usual arrangement has a stair tower projecting from the rear of the building.³⁷ The stairs were generally of the open-well variety, with the runs climbing the walls of the tower. Occasionally the stairs were located in the central passage, freeing the back room for use as a parlor.³⁸

The cruciform-shaped building is characteristic of English architecture of the Middle Ages. Medieval men of England were fairly religious, so they may have looked to the church for their architectural inspiration. The porch projection is

first found in Anglo-Saxon churches, such as the Church of St. Lawrence at Bradford-on-Avon (circa 700 A.D.). The vestibule was common in domestic architecture by the fourteenth century. The early Virginians, who were for the most part Anglicans, were not opposed to using an architectural style with religious associations. One proud owner of a manor in New Kent County even named his home "Criss Cross" (Christ's Cross). The stair tower, too, originated long before it was used in Virginia. In the eleventh century Bishop Gundulf built the Tower of London, including stair towers, for William the Conqueror. The feature became common in manor houses, and by 1600 the use of straight flights of steps around the sides of a tower had replaced the spiral stair.³⁹

The Old Stone House

Although the use of stone is rare in Virginia, the Old Stone House in Richmond typifies the architectural style of a seventeenth-century colonist's cottage. The house is designed in the primitive hall and parlor plan, so its battened front and back doors open directly into the hall. The hall and the smaller chamber both have crude stone fireplaces.⁴⁰ The brick chimney stacks, which were a later addition,⁴¹ are built within the gable walls. This is unusual in a warm climate where projecting chimneys were usually built to dispel heat. There were originally fireplaces in every room, but the upper ones have been covered over.⁴² Interior decoration is slight: the original exposed ceiling beams have been covered with plaster, but wide floor boards remain. The steep, narrow stairs



POE MUSEUM — The oldest house in Richmond, erected about 1686, has been dedicated as a shrine to Edgar Allan Poe, the famous poet who resided in this City.

The front facade of the Old Stone House.

to the upper half-story rise from just left of the back door. Upstairs a narrow hall separates the two rooms.⁴³ Several features mark the house as being of later seventeenth or early eighteenth-century date even though it is in a primitive style: the cedar-shingled roof is not as steep as were earlier ones based on thatch-roof prototypes. This shows that enough colonization time had elapsed for builders to adapt English practices to Virginia materials. The use of dormers (Three in this house) created an upper story from the former loft. Since there are no slit-windows in the gable ends of the Old Stone House, the dormers are probably original, another sign that the house was probably not one of the earliest ones in Virginia. The windows on the lower story, too, are of the double-hung sash variety, a late seventeenth-century improvement on the hinged casement window. These could have replaced original medieval style casement windows, but the window openings are wider than those normal for leaded casement windows.

The origin of the Old Stone House is a mystery. Stone is not indigenous to the Tidewater area; tradition holds that the stone was used as ballast and then thrown ashore.⁴⁴ The letters I.R., believed to stand for Jacobus Rex, are carved into one stone on the front of the house. If one assumes that the house were built during the reign of James II, it would have to date from before 1688, when the king was deposed in the "Bloodless Revolution."⁴⁵ If this is the case, then the building may have served as a fortress-trading post on land belonging first to Thomas Stegge, and then to William Byrd I. It is known that there was a stone building on Byrd's Richmond

property. Another interpretation of the house's history claims that it was built in 1737 by Jacob Ege, a German tailor or cooper. Ege had purchased the property from John Gringette, who had bought it from William Byrd II.⁴⁶

A more romantic, but less plausible version of the Old Stone House tale says that during his voyage to America, Jacob Ege became engaged to Maria Dorothea Sherer, daughter of General Sherer of Herse Castle in Germany. Legend has it that the general gave his daughter a home in Richmond, the Old Stone House, as a wedding present.⁴⁷ If this story is true, then it is likely that the house is of seventeenth-century origin.

Though the exact date of the house is unknown, it is typical of late seventeenth-century dwellings in Virginia. A New England architectural historian examined the house at a time when the beams were exposed by fallen plaster; it was his opinion that the carpentry was identical to that of the few New England houses known to have been built before the reign of Queen Anne.⁴⁸

Many of Virginia's most prominent sons have been linked with the Old Stone House. President Monroe is supposed to have boarded there as a schoolboy, and again during the Convention of 1788. Rumor boasted that the house served as Washington's headquarters until someone realized that Washington had not been in Richmond during the Revolution. It is still believed, however, that Washington, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, and Henry visited the Old Stone House.⁴⁹

A less-noble American, Benedict Arnold, is supposed to have

swept his cavalry past the house. That story was recounted by Mrs Samuel Ege, whose husband (the grandson of Jacob and Dorothea Ege) served as a commissary in the continental army when Tarleton raided Richmond.⁵⁰ The building's most important association, however, is with a Virginian who was neither a soldier or a statesman, but an author. The Old Stone House serves as the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine. Poe never lived in the house, but was probably familiar with it. The house is now owned by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, which uses the dwelling and several adjacent buildings as a museum of Poe memorabilia.⁵¹

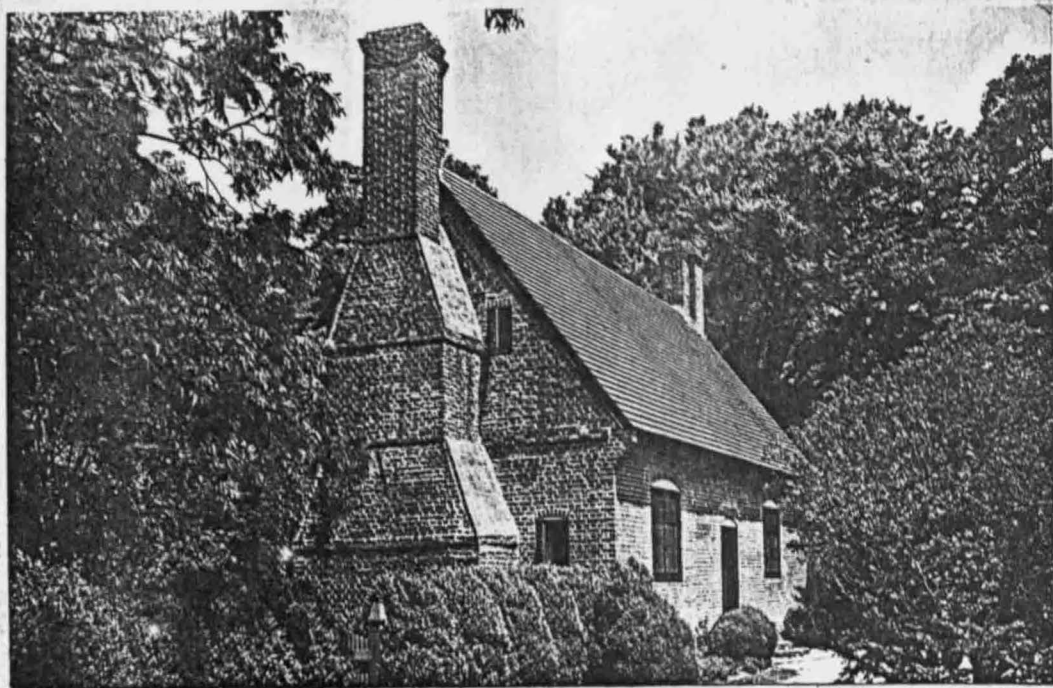
The Adam Thoroughgood House

The building known as the Adam Thoroughgood House is a cottage built of sun-baked brick.⁵² The house is of modest proportions, being forty-six by twenty-one feet. The brick of three walls (which rise 8'2" from the water table to the eaves)⁵³ is laid in English bond (alternating rows of headers and stretchers), but the front wall is of Flemish bond (rows of alternating headers and stretchers). Since there is no joint or difference in brick size or type to indicate that the front wall is a later addition, the theory that Flemish bond was not used in the colony before 1700 is here refuted.⁵⁴ This change in brick bond was apparently a quirk of the builder--it is also seen in the projecting south chimney, in which the lowest three of four belt courses are laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers, while the rest of the stack is

English bond.⁵⁵ The chimneys of the Thoroughgood house are unusual in the South, because one is inside and one outside the house walls. The inside chimney is on the northern side of the house, so perhaps it was built inside to conserve heat on the less-sunny exposure.⁵⁶ The southern chimney, built outside the wall in the pyramid shape, is massive--it measures 10'5" across the breast and four feet in depth.⁵⁷ The broad base diminishes by weatherings (slopes) to three feet at the top, and its projection from the wall diminishes by horizontal offsets at the bottom and top of the lateral weatherings, thus creating the pyramid shape. The weatherings are protected from disintegration by brick and tile laid flat across them.⁵⁸ Both tall chimney stacks are T-shaped, a style used to reveal multiple flues.⁵⁹ Glazed headers, laid parallel to the barge-board on the gable walls, emphasize the rake of the roof.⁶⁰ This medieval feature has its origins in eleventh-century Normandy.⁶¹

The original roof of the house was made of split-oak sheathing applied like weather-boarding. A layer of slate shingles now covers the original roof.⁶² There is no cellar in this house, nor any evidence that there ever was one. The water table is of unbroken brickwork. This indicates, as will be discussed later, that this building was not the home of Adam Thoroughgood, Sr.⁶³

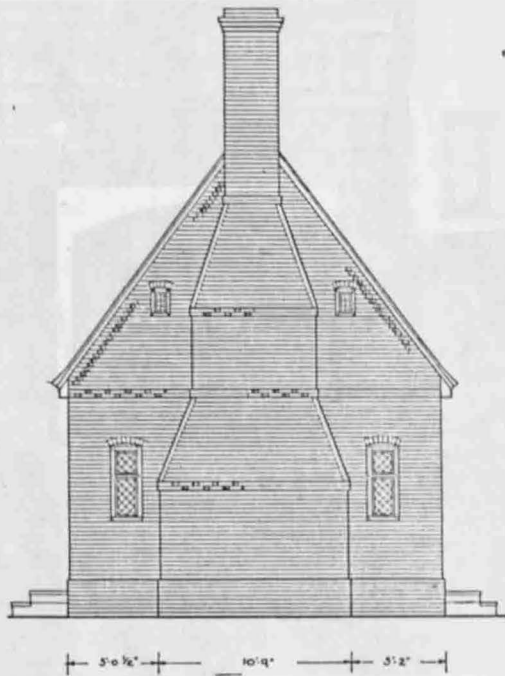
All openings to the house have segmental arches.⁶⁴ Three semicircular steps lead up to the front and back doors, which are battened. The three narrow windows of each facade had leaded casements. There were no dormers in the original



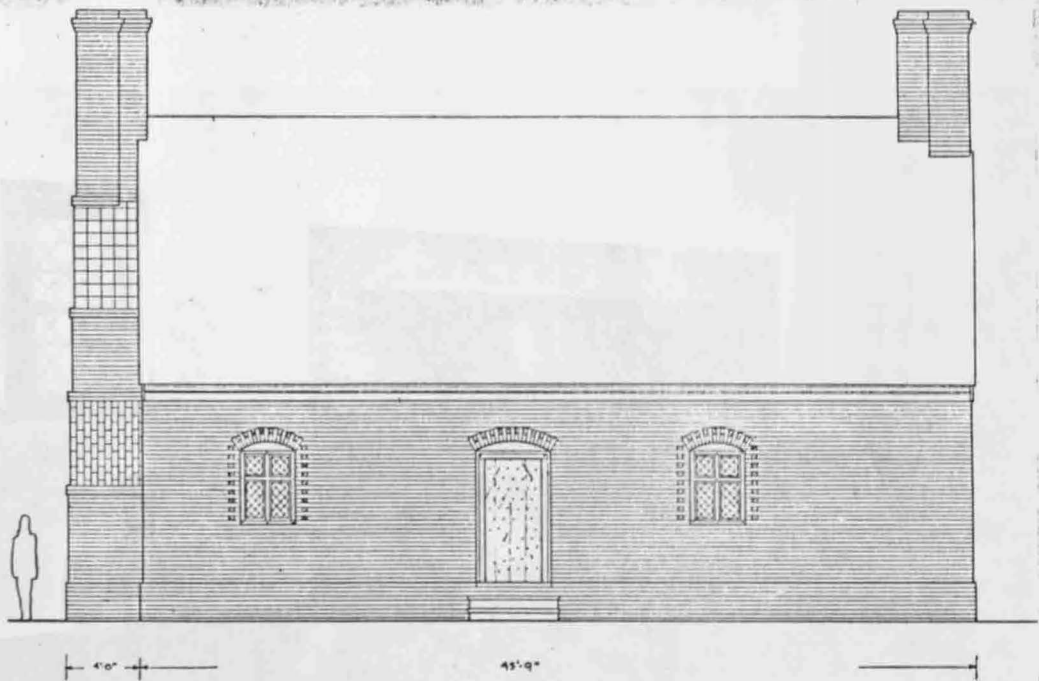
The south side of the Adam Thoroughgood House.



The eastern facade of the Adam Thoroughgood House.



RESTORED SOUTH ELEVATION



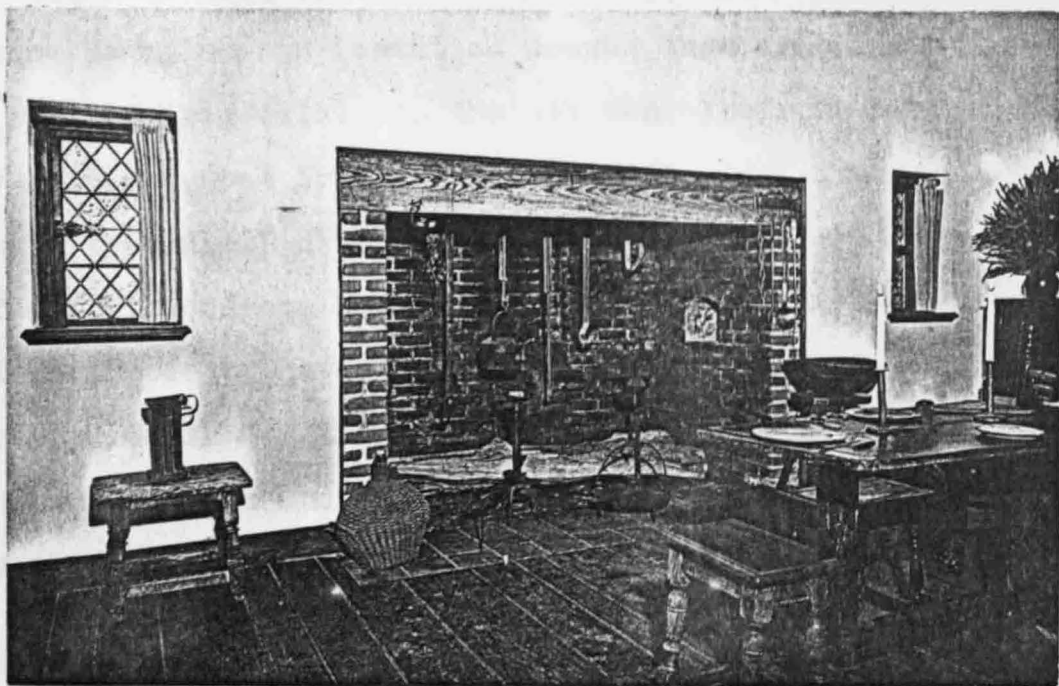
RESTORED EAST ELEVATION

Scale, $\frac{3}{4}$ in. to the foot

Waterman's drawings of the Adam Thoroughgood House.



The parlor of the Adam Thoroughgood House.



The hall of the Adam Thoroughgood House.

house, so tiny slit-windows in the gable wall provided the only light.

The interior of the house was originally in the hall and parlor style, but eighteenth-century additions changed it into a central-passage house. During the remodeling a stairway of heart pine was also added. It rises on the right side of the hall to a height of about seven feet, then turns at right angles to the left on a ten-foot platform, the width of the downstairs hall. Another few steps rise at right angles from the platform to the second story.⁶⁵ The parlor, to the left of the front door, contains a fireplace that projects into the room. Restoration has shown that this fireplace was much larger when the house was first built, and contained Dutch ovens.⁶⁶ The fireplace must have been cut back in the eighteenth century when the pine paneling was installed around the fireplace and the lower part of the walls. In the kitchen, the room where the family gathered most frequently, the 8'6" wide fireplace is flush with the wall.⁶⁷ Both upper chambers have small fireplaces. The north bedroom has a trap door leading to a passageway that is supposed to have led to the river. Such hiding places were typically built into the colonial home as protection from Indian attack and as a store-place for provisions, especially those smuggled in to avoid royal tax.⁶⁸

Adam Thoroughgood was born in 1604 in Lynn, England. His father was Reverend William Thoroughgood of Grimstead Parish. Though Adam Thoroughgood came to Virginia as an indentured servant, he was not of low birth. His older brother, Sir John Thoroughgood of Kensington, was knighted by Charles I

at the king's coronation.⁶⁹ Adam sailed to Virginia in the ship Charles in 1621 and quickly worked off his indenture,⁷⁰ during which he learned to grow tobacco and acquired some land. In 1624 he returned to London and married Sarah Offley, a woman whose forbears included knights and lord mayors of London. The couple sailed to the colony in 1628 aboard the Hope well.⁷¹ The name of the ship must have been good luck to Thoroughgood, because he prospered immediately and became a leader in the colony. He served as a Burgess as early as 1629.⁷² Seven years after Thoroughgood "homesteaded" in Virginia he was granted 5,350 acres of land for having brought one hundred and five new settlers to the colony.⁷³ Among these new colonists was Augustine Warner, who built Warner Hall in Gloucester County, and was the ancestor of George Washington (his great, great grandson), Robert E. Lee,⁷⁴ and Queen Elizabeth II.⁷⁵ Thoroughgood's land was in Elizabeth City Shire on a river that he called Lynnhaven, after his home in England. After the land grant his prestige continued to grow. He became wealthy as a surveyor and tobacco planter and was often referred to as "Captain Thoroughgood," a title of respect. He was one of the first justices of Lower Norfolk County⁷⁶ and a vestryman at his parish church. Services were often held in his home until he built the first Lynnhaven Parish Church near his house in 1639.⁷⁷ Thoroughgood served as a member of the Governor's Council in 1636.⁷⁸

At his death in 1640 Adam Thoroughgood left his wife "a mare, a foal, one of the best cows in the pen, half a dozen goats, and four sows" and the use of his house during her

lifetime--"all of which I give her as a memorial to my love."⁷⁹ The parish church received from the estate one thousand pounds of tobacco for "some necessary and decent adornmant." His son, Adam Jr., received all of the rest of the estate at age twenty-one.⁸⁰ Three daughters also survived their father.⁸¹

The widowed Mrs. Thoroughgood must not have been inconsolable with grief because she soon married John Gookin. She was shortly bereaved again, and consequently turned her home into a tavern to support herself. This indomitable lady was wed again, this time to Colonel Francis Yeardley, the son of a royal governor of Virginia.⁸² She must have been most fond of her second husband, because she directed in her will (1657) that her "best diamond nechlace and jewell" be sent to England to buy six diamond rings and two black tombstones for the graves of herself and her second husband in the churchyard at Lynnhaven.⁸³

The furnishings of a typical seventeenth-century room are known by an inventory of the items reserved for the Gookins' chamber. Listed are: one bed with blankets; a rug and furniture; two pairs of sheets and pillowcases; one table with carpet; tablecloth and napkins; knives and forks; one cupboard and cupboard cloths, two linen and one woollen; six stools, six cushions; six pictures. Also included are one pewter basin and ewer; one warming pan; one bedpan; one pair of andirons in the chimney; one pair of tongs, one fire shovel, one wicker chair for a child. Mrs. Gookin's kitchen utensils included one plate for the cupboard, one salt cellar, one bowl, one tankard, one wine cup, and one dozen spoons.⁸⁴ The Gookins'

bed is not described, but seventeenth-century beds had no springs. The best beds were of down; the next most desirable was the "flock bed," filled with bits of wool, rags, milkweed, and cattail fluffs. Sheets were made of canvas of Holland, a coarse, unbleached linen. Other primary furniture consisted of chests and benches. Chairs were a rarity--usually reserved as the seat of honor for the master of the house or a guest. The first tables in colonial homes were boards laid across trestles and set aside after meals. By the mid-seventeenth century Englishmen were crafting fine furniture, so Virginians had dining, serving, and tea tables.⁸⁵

It is questionable whether the building now known as the Adam Thoroughgood House is the same dwelling occupied by the original immigrant. The letters "Ad. T." carved into one brick of the house would indicate that Adam Thoroughgood, father or son, built the house.⁸⁶ Adam Thoroughgood, Sr., left a "brick manor house" to his wife, so he may have built the present dwelling for his son. Some historians feel that this house may have stood near the manor house, or have been built before it.⁸⁷ The controversy arises over a cellar: there is none in the extant building, yet all documents indicate that Adam Thoroughgood's home had one. It is known that Adam, Sr., Adam, Jr., and Argoll (son of Adam, Jr.) Thoroughgood each in turn possessed a "manor plantation." At Argoll's death in 1699, an inventory described the rooms in his home: hall, parlor, parlor chamber, kitchen, porch chamber, passage room, kitchen chamber, hall chamber, and milk house in "ye sellar."⁸⁸ This would seem to be a considerably larger house than the

present "Adam Thoroughgood House," and it includes the questionable cellar.

As with the Old Stone House, the exact origins of the Thoroughgood House are not as important for the purposes of this paper as the fact that it is a fine example of the most typical colonial home of the seventeenth century. The house was lived in by members of the Thoroughgood family until the mid-nineteenth century, when it became a tenant farmhouse.⁸⁹ The house was rescued and renovated by Miss Grace Keeler.⁹⁰ The exterior of the house has now been restored to its seventeenth-century appearance and is open to the public.

Bacon's Castle

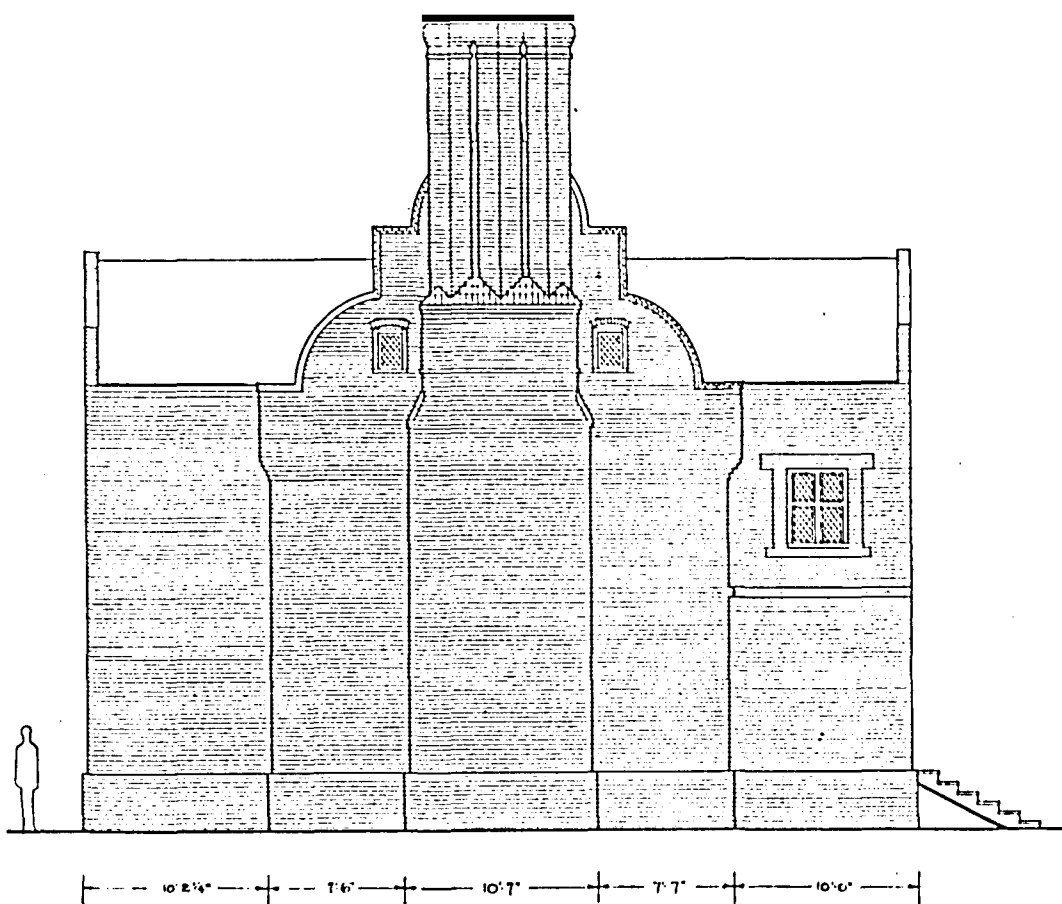
Bacon's Castle, the only Jacobean house left in the United States,⁹¹ is built in the cross-shaped plan, the most advanced style of the medieval period of Virginia architecture. It is probably typical of the home of the upper-class Virginia planter.⁹² The cruciform shape is formed by a porch about ten feet square in the front of the house and a slightly larger stair tower behind.⁹³ These appendages project from the bulk of the house, which is in the central-passage style. Chamfered beams run through the present hall partitions, indicating that the original house was probably in the "great hall" and parlor style typical of the English manor house.⁹⁴

The sandy-brown bricks of the Castle are laid in English bond,⁹⁵ creating walls that are twenty-one inches thick.⁹⁶

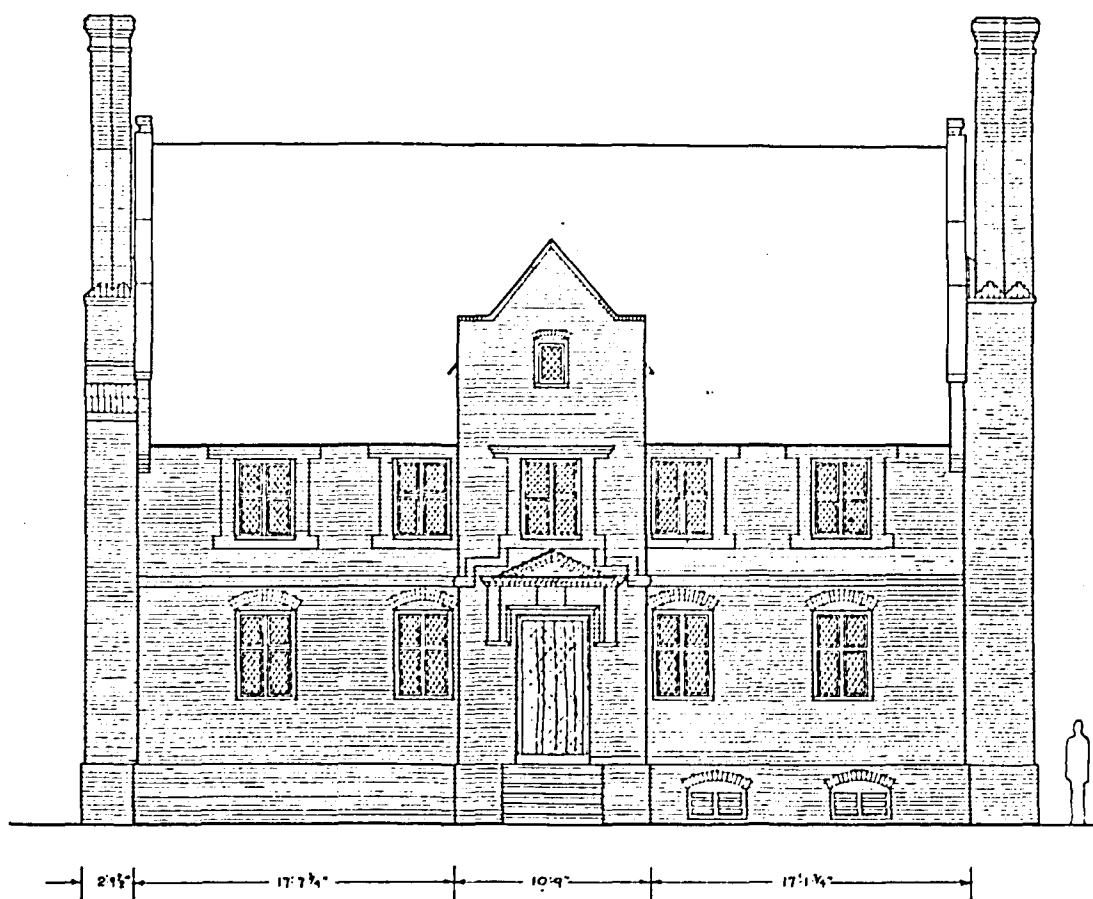
No glazed or rubbed brick was used to build the Castle, but the south front was once decorated with molded and cut brickwork, which was cut back and plastered over when the door was changed from the south to the east of the tower. The severity of the south front is broken by a two-course semicircular belt of molded brick between the first and second stories. The water table is an unmolded three-inch offset.⁹⁷

The most interesting architectural features of Bacon's Castle are the curvilinear gables and the diagonally set triple chimney stacks. About 1600 the English borrowed the Flemish Gothic gable and then simplified it to harmonize with their own medieval architecture. The curves spring from the corbeled parapets at the eaves. Rectangular projections resembling finials crown the gables.⁹⁸ The base of the south chimney (the other is covered by a nineteenth-century addition) diminishes by steep weatherings near the roof line. Three feet above the roof both chimneys terminate in a wash which acts as the base of the triple stacks. Each flue is set diagonally to the base and is independent of the other stacks, except where the caps engage. Bands of plaster accent the caps.⁹⁹ This type of chimney stack follows medieval precedent. Seventeenth-century Yorkshire stacks are almost invariably made like those at Bacon's Castle.¹⁰⁰

Another architectural detail reminiscent of Jacobean England was the pediment over the vestibule doorway. Though it has been plastered over, enough remains to show how renaissance classicism was permeating medieval architecture.¹⁰¹ The first floor windows were topped by medieval segmental arches; the



RESTORED WEST ELEVATION



RESTORED SOUTH ELEVATION

Scale, $\frac{3}{8}$ in. to the foot

Waterman's drawing's of Bacon's Castle.

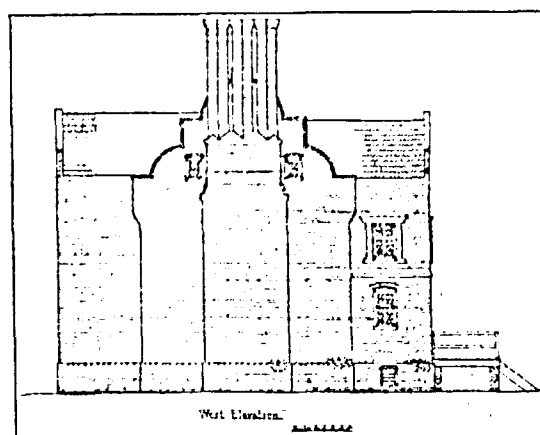
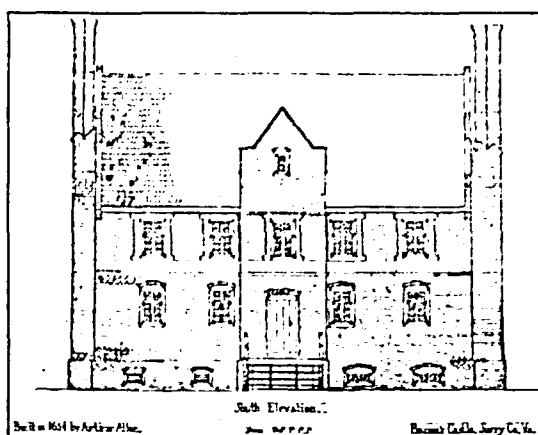
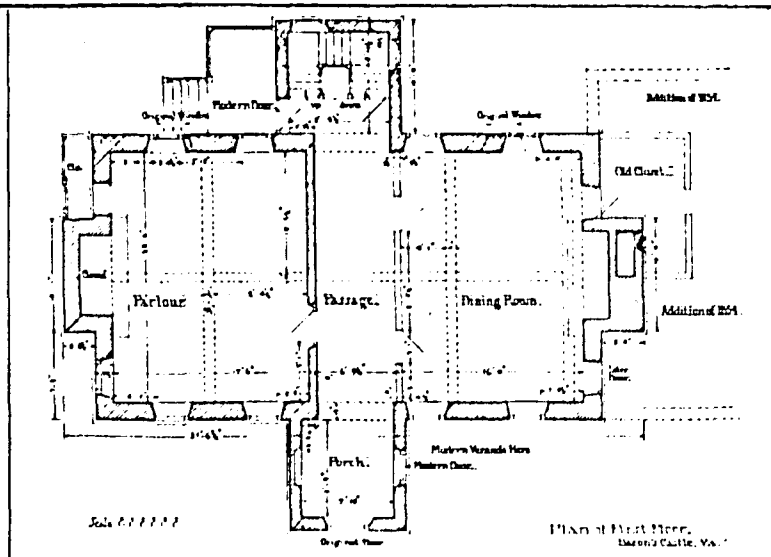
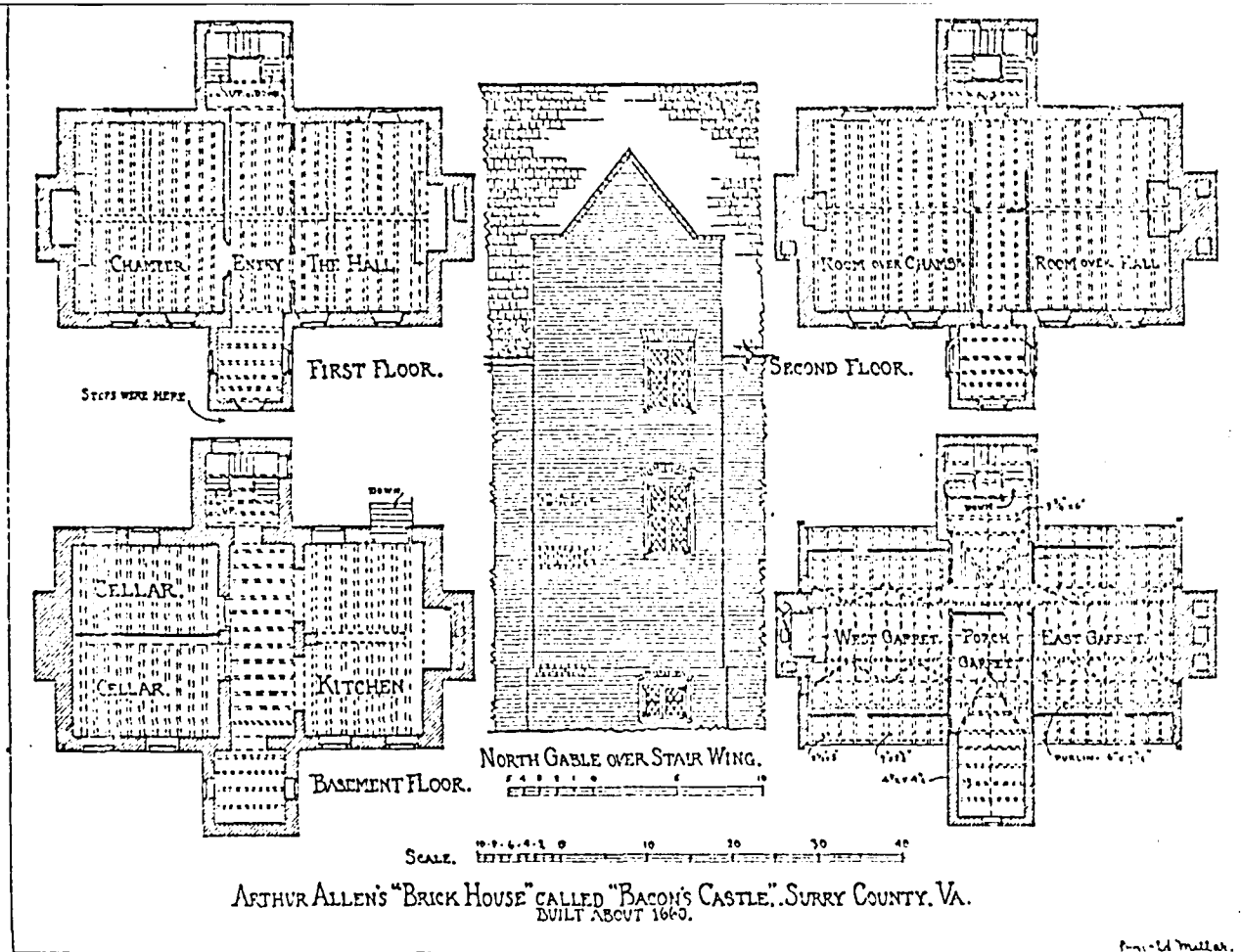


Figure 20. Bacon's Castle, Surry County, Virginia. Plan and elevation, restored. Before 1676
From measured drawings by Donald Millar

second story windows have flat arches and Jacobean brick enframements (borders of projecting brick).¹⁰² Windows were of glazed glass, and probably had rectangular panes four by six inches.¹⁰³ Windows were divided by cross mullions to form casements below and transom lights above.¹⁰⁴ The cellar (which includes a Tudor dungeon)¹⁰⁵ was lighted by unglazed windows with diagonally set horizontal wooden bars.¹⁰⁶

The interior of the Castle follows the central-passage plan on every floor. Hall and parlor are found on the main floor, two large bedrooms on the second floor, and three more in the garret. The basement follows the same general plan, with cellar and milk room in one half, and a warming kitchen with a brick floor on the other side.¹⁰⁷ The ceilings of the first floor rooms are divided into four parts by summer beams.¹⁰⁸ The chamfers of the second floor summer beams are carved.¹⁰⁹ A turned post similar to Tudor stair balusters supports the beams of the great hall. The house boasts fireplaces in every room, and several deep window seats.¹¹⁰ The original interior walls were plastered and whitewashed, but the lower rooms were paneled about 1712.¹¹¹

The Castle was built around 1655 by Arthur Allen, who came to Surry County, Virginia from England in 1649. Allen died in 1670, leaving his home to his son, Major Arthur Allen, speaker of the House of Burgesses. Major Allen was a partisan of Governor Berkeley, against whom Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 was directed. A group of Bacon's followers seized Allen's home as a fortress in one of the last acts of the disintegrating rebellion. The house has been known as "Bacon's

Castle" ever since.¹¹² The rebellion arose in 1675 when Governor Berkeley refused to punish the Susquehanna Indians for their raids on frontier settlements because he was making personal profit from fur trade with the Indians. Berkeley's lack of concern about the Indian uprising came as a final blow to colonists suffering under the staggering taxation of his corrupt regime.¹¹³ When he would not avenge ^ethe crimes against the settlers, Nathaniel Bacon, a popular planter from Curles Neck, took action himself after the murder of his overseer by the Indians. Bacon and his army defeated the Indians in a series of skirmishes, but their defiances angered Governor Berkeley, who declared them outlaws. In the brief civil war that followed Bacon forced Berkeley to flee to the eastern shore and ruled the colony himself under martial law.¹¹⁴

After Bacon's untimely death (probably due to dysentery) on October 26, 1676,¹¹⁵ the rebellion petered out. He died before a group of his followers captured the Allen house, but his name has been linked with the house ever since. The seizure of the Allen house was led by Major William Rookings,¹¹⁶ who must not have been as strong a leader as Bacon, for the rebellion soon collapsed. The rebels' stronghold was recovered by men from the British ship Young Prince which was lying in the James River.¹¹⁷ After the defeat of the of the rebels Governor Berkeley resumed control of the colony.

Berkeley punished the rebels harshly. So many of Bacon's followers were hanged for treason that the English authorities felt that the governor was being overly vindictive, so they

recalled him and dissolved his "old and rotten" House of Burgesses.¹¹⁸ Charles II is reputed to have said that Berkeley executed more men than he himself had done for the murder of his father.¹¹⁹

The rebels may have seemed heroes to some, but they were villains to Major Allen. In 1677 he sued a leader of the rebellion for seizing his home as a garrison.¹²⁰ Allen testified that the rebels kept him from his own house, killed his cattle, and stole whatever they could carry, including books, tablecloths, napkins, towels, and aprons.¹²¹

Though Nathaniel Bacon is the man whose name is most frequently associated with the house, the original builder is still remembered in the house's folk-history. Legend holds that Allen was not really an English commoner but a Prince of the House of Hanover. The prince had to flee to America under an assumed name after he killed his twin brother because they both loved the same woman. If this legend is true, perhaps "the Prince" could not rest in peace because of his crime, as a ghost is reputed to haunt the garden at Bacon's Castle.¹²²

This garden must have been especially lovely in the seventeenth century. The foundations are all that is left of the walls that once enclosed the garden and forecourt.¹²³ Other parts of the grounds, such as the quadruple avenue of oaks approaching the house, are probably more lovely now than they could have been three hundred years ago. Views of the Castle from the north and east are said to be reminiscent of Jacobean manors in England.¹²⁴ The beauty of the house and

grounds is not accesible, however, to the public. The house, which was restored in 1942 by Mr. and Mrs. Walker P. Warren, is now a private residence.¹²⁵

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the medieval style florished in Virginia when it was waning in England. This occurs because the colonists were mostly of lower-class origin, so traditional folk architecture was popular with them. The medieval style home was fairly simple to construct, and it reminded them of their homeland. So the medieval style, as it redeveloped in seventeenth-century Virginia, encapsulated in one hundred years the evolution that had taken centuries in England. The best examples of the development of the medieval style in Virginia are the Old Stone House in the hall and parlor style, the Adam Thoroughgood House in the central-passage plan, and, finally, Bacon's Castle in the cruciform shape.

The End

NOTES

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